

The INFORMANT



Text-to-911 coming to Kansas City

Kansas City Police, as well as 40 other public safety agencies in the metropolitan area, will soon begin accepting text messages to 911, thanks to efforts by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC).

“Technology is advancing, and we have to keep up with it,” Communications Unit Supervisor Stephanie Fagan said.

Approximately 70 percent of all calls to KCPD’s 911 system came from cell phones in 2015, so they’re already the primary way the public reaches emergency responders.

However, police are encouraging everyone to “Call if you can, text if you can’t.”

“Call-takers can get information from you much more quickly and will be able to pinpoint your location much better if you call,” Chief Darryl Forté said. “But we understand there are some situations when speaking out could be dangerous – like during a kidnapping or home invasion – and that’s what this service is made for. It’s also going to be very beneficial to our deaf and speech-impaired residents.”

Calls remain much more reliable than text messages. KCPD conducted numerous tests throughout the city to see where text messages to 911 were getting through and where they weren’t.

“We weren’t satisfied with the test results, so we’re encouraging people to continue to call 911 for now,” said Major Karl Oakman of the Logistical Support Division.

MARC stated in its release that although all local public safety answering points use the same technology, they have unique characteristics that may impact the success rate of texting to 911.

“In Kansas City, Missouri, for example, call centers typically experience a higher call volume, and there are more high-rise buildings,” the MARC release states. “For these reasons, city officials encourage KCMO residents who need emergency services to call 9-1-1 while testing continues. Other cities may have certain areas where cell signals are weak.”

KCPD is working with cell phone providers to address some of these issues.

In addition to “Call if you can, text if you can’t,” there are many things the public needs to keep in mind about text-to-911, according to the Mid-America Regional Council:

- All 911 centers in Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray coun-

ties in Missouri and Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties in Kansas are now prepared to accept texts to 911, but the service is not yet available statewide.

- Only certain carriers are currently supporting texts to 911. These include AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon. Depending on the technology and the device being used, customers of other carriers may also be able to send a text to 911.

- 911 can only receive text characters at this time. Messages with pictures, videos or emoticons may not be received at all. Do not send pictures or video in a text to 911.

- The 911 call center cannot identify the exact location of a person who is texting. It can also take more time for a 911 call-taker to respond to a text message. When texting to 911, it is important to give an accurate address or location as quickly as possible.

- Texts to 911 cannot include more than one recipient. Do not copy other people on a text to 911.

- Texting 911 is not available when roaming. A text messaging plan with a participating carrier is necessary to text to 911. The type of phone may also impact the ability to text to 911. Although disconnected phones can call 911, they cannot text 911.

- If the Text to 911 is not available, the person who is texting should receive a bounce-back message similar to “CALL 911. Text to 911 not available.”

- Carriers treat text messages to 911 like any other text message. Until the Federal Communications Commission sets specific guidelines, texts to 911 will not be given any priority on wireless networks. Emergency texts will be subject to the same service speeds or delays as any other text message, depending on network strength in your area. And as with other text messages, data rates may apply.

The KCPD Communications Unit will receive and respond to text messages using existing TTY (text telephone) technology that has been in place for years to assist people who are deaf or speech-impaired. The acceptance of text messages did not require additional equipment or extensive training.

9-1-1

Call if you can,
text if you can’t.

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EOC 63's 'Fab 5' in (almost) all ranks

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” - Henry Ford

Five members of KCPD's 63rd Entrant Officer Class are examples of what Henry Ford spoke.

After joining the department and graduating from the Academy on June 6, 1986, the “Fab Five” followed different career paths, resulting in a unique situation: five remaining classmates, five different ranks. The rest either retired or resigned. Sergeant Ward Smith, Firearms Section, was also a member of the 63rd EOC, albeit with another agency at the time.

Officer Jay McCune, Chief's Office, began his career two years earlier than the rest, as a clerk in the Records Unit in June 1984. His father, Retired KCPD Officer Joseph McCune, was his inspiration to become an officer. Being the baby of his academy class was great, but it meant he couldn't go out with the group on weekends because he was too young. He recognized early on that several of his classmates were really sharp and would move up the ranks. “You could tell Colonel Kuehl was really smart, same thing with Major Greenwell. Captain True always tested well and we kind of gave him a hard time about it. ... Everybody got along well,” McCune said. He recalls the most memorable and historical event of his career was in January of 1999 on the escort detail for Pope John Paul II in St. Louis. It was probably the only time, he said, where one city would take command in another city like that. McCune said it's been a good career, and he has no reason to leave. Plus the retirement package is better and worth staying around for!

Sergeant David Ptomey, Traffic Squad 801, had his eye on a law enforcement career since high school. After graduation, he enlisted in the Army and joined the Military Police, which led him here. It was the ‘big arrest’ he loved the most. He remembers when multiple Kansas and Missouri agencies went on a three-week manhunt in search of William Belsche, who had 14 outstanding felony warrants for armed robbery and aggravated burglary in both states. Ptomey developed a rapport with some area prostitutes, turned informants, who were able to correctly identify the subject and provide his address. He and two other officers went to the home and waited. Just as it began to get dark, Belsche came out of his apartment. Ptomey and one officer stood up, surprised him, and made the arrest. He said it was more memorable because he was able to track him down with the help of his informants. Is retirement in his near future? “At this point in my



The remaining members of EOC 63 occupy every rank but Chief. They are: Officer Jay McCune, Sergeant David Ptomey, Captain Roy True, Major Donna Greenwell and Deputy Chief Bob Kuehl.



the key to his longevity is, “I just really enjoy the job. I'm still having fun. I love it in Tactical Response. It's a really good job and I still enjoy it, so I'm still here.”

Major Donna Greenwell, Research and Development Division, said she kind of stumbled into law enforcement — literally. She

planned to play college basketball but blew out her knee her senior year and lost a full-ride scholarship. So she decided to support her friend who wanted to go through the PD process, going through it with her. Greenwell was hired, but her friend wasn't. She said their academy class was crazy and there were possibly a lot of rules put into place because of them. She admitted it was quite a successful class, naming Retired Captain Chelly Pfeifer, Captain Roy True and Retired Major Bryon Price as examples. Greenwell said, “It's been a fun career. It's been great. I can't

complain.” But when asked about retirement, she said, “I'll be retiring this year. 30 years is long enough for anybody. After June 7, when the day feels right, watch out. I might be gone.”

Colonel Bob Kuehl, Professional Development and Research Bureau, said he's known as far back as he can remember he was supposed to be a cop. He never wavered and never questioned it. To get sworn in and receive his badge was his lifelong dream come true. Lucky for him, since he didn't have a “Plan B”! Throughout his career, he said he is humbled by the dedication and commitment of the men and women he works for every day. “Yes, I work for them,” Kuehl said. “I wake up each morning and step into my dream! I love what I do. Where else could I be surrounded by so many excellent folks. They teach me something new every day.” So, there are no plans to retire soon for him. He's too busy enjoying the ride.

High fives to the Fab Five!

career I have thought about it and discussed it many times. I can tell you, I won't be here for New Year's in 2019,”

Ptomey said. After serving for six Chiefs of Police, why not.

Captain Roy True, Tactical Response Team II, had decided four or five years prior to joining KCPD that law enforcement was for him. He spent three years as a Ft. Scott, Kan., officer before coming here. The opportunity to attend the FBI National Academy at Quantico, Va., in 2010 was special and meant a lot to True. He did confirm that he was teased about his good grades, like when he received a score of 98 on the Constitutional Law test. According to True,

Off the Clock: Officer, wife rescue dogs

“We foster dogs because we like knowing we are making a difference,” said Officer Tanner Moats of the Central Patrol Division Community Action Team. “Maybe not in the grand scheme of things, but to that one dog and their adoptive family, we are changing lives and it feels really great.”

Officer Moats and his wife Elaina Moats have fostered more than 70 puppies and dogs in just under a year and a half.

“We have met some *amazing* families,” Elaina said. “At the end of the day, it is so rewarding to be able to find these dogs their ‘fur’-ever home.”

Their fostering journey began the day they saw a picture of a shepherd/hound puppy on Facebook. The dog was curled up in a little ball scared to death in the corner of a kennel at a nearby city’s Animal Control. He was perfectly healthy but was going to be euthanized that weekend to make room for other dogs coming in. Elaina and Officer Moats knew they wanted to help. They then contacted Friends of KCK Animal Control who told them about fostering for an organization called Unleashed Pet Rescue. Luckily, that evening there was a fostering class that they could attend. Afterwards they

went straight to animal control and were able to pick up the dog, they saw on Facebook, “Apple Cobbler.” Officer Moats says they have been hooked ever since.

“When we first started fostering dogs it was really hard to give them up because you get so attached,” he said. “But it has gotten easier knowing these dogs will have great homes, and in turn gives us the space to save another one.”

Unleashed Pet Rescue receives countless stray/feral dogs weekly. They post those dogs’ pictures on Facebook for foster families to see ,



Officer Tanner Moats and his wife, Elaina, foster, socialize and train dozens of dogs annually, including several litters of puppies, like those above. Below is Officer Moats with the couple's own dogs, Sergeant, Eva, Leo and Echo.



families take them in until they are ready to be adopted. Officer Moats says as the dog’s foster family, it’s not only their job to get them ready to be adoptable but to make sure that the family is a good fit for the dog. Officer Moats and Elaina foster a dog for 2 -3 weeks on average. During that time they are helping with potty and kennel training and getting the dog spayed/neutered and micro-chipped.

“Watching a feral dog go from not wanting any contact, showing their teeth and growling at you to all of a sudden cuddling, snuggling and laying with you in a two-week process is the most gratifying thing,” Officer Moats said.

Not only do Officer Moats and Elaina foster numerous dogs at a time, but they have four dogs of their own. They have three German Shepherds and recently adopted an Alaskan Malamute. He lived in a shelter for three years. The Moats said it has been fun to see how he has changed since they adopted him.

As busy as they are with their own four and currently fostering two sisters, they don’t see anything changing anytime soon. The running joke between the two of

them is they say sometimes they might take a break, but then two days later they are fostering another dog. They love what they do and want to continue helping where they can.

Unleashed Pet Rescue is a donation based organization located at 5918 Broadmoor, Mission, KS 66202. If you would like to learn more about them, foster or donate, visit unleashedpetrescue.com. Officer Moats is always willing to help in any way possible, so if department members find a stray dog and don’t know what to do next, call Officer Moats at 816-550-4616.

Upcoming Events

March 4
Police Foundation Call
For Backup Event

March 8
Board of Police
Commissioners Meeting

March 29
Award Ceremony

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Officially Speaking

Awards

Special Unit Citation
Traffic Enforcement Unit
Traffic Investigation Unit
Parking Control Section

Life-Saving Award
Officer Mario Moore

Meritorious Service Award
Supervisor Dawn Deterding
Supervisor Andrea Khan

Certificate of Commendation
Officer Isaac Freestone
Detective Cory Horalek

Distinguished Service Medal
Officer Jacob Phillips

Retirement

Sergeant Todd Hall

Obituaries

Retired Major Kathleen Pierce
Retired Assistant Supervisor Mildred Marx

The mission of the
Kansas City Missouri
Police Department
is to protect and serve
with professionalism,
honor and integrity.